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THROUGH FADING MIST

· AND

OTHER POEMS



CHARLES HAYWARD GIFFIN

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Dedicated

To all who see, or strive to see
Beyond this veil of sense;
Who, seeking God with constancy,
In Him find recompense.



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THROUGH FADING MIST

A mist is brooding o'er the land
On this midsummer day;
I see no landmark where I stand,
To point my homeward way.

Although I scarce can see the hills
The mist so thickly hides,
I catch the sound of rippling rills
That course along their sides.

Around me, ripened fruits hang low,
 Whilst perfumes load the air;
And Nature's gifts, I surely know,
 Unseen, lie everywhere.

I feel the south wind softly blow,
 Which soon will sweep away
Those clouds of vapor drifting slow,
 On this midsummer day.

Full well I see; the clouds that hide
 The works God forms in mind,
His winds will scatter far and wide,
 And leave no mist behind.

Love's countless charms, though now concealed;
 Truth's gems of purest ray;
And "Perfect Man" will be revealed
 In God's unclouded day.

SO REST MY HEART

God's love and care will never cease;
And God Himself is here :
So rest my heart in perfect peace;
There is no room for fear.

I were in heaven, did I but see
God's bounties where I stand;
His loving gifts surrounding me,
Strewn wide on every hand.

His blessings oft remain concealed
Whilst mortal mists arise;
But every good shall be revealed
As Truth anoints our eyes.

The clouds of sense must roll away,
And every shadow flee;
For Love disperses day by day
The mist 'twixt God and me.

THE BOND OF PEACE

As I behold the fragrant flowers,
Wet with the dews or gentle showers,
And skies are clear;
When all around earth's praises rise,
And fill my soul with glad surprise,
Then Heaven is near.

When just beyond, a murmuring brook
Flows swift along through shaded nook
To meet the sea,
There comes a peaceful mood within;
God, Man, and Nature seem akin,
And Heaven in me.

I hear the robins sweet refrain,
And pause to listen once again
To Love's own note.
My heart responds with joyful cry
That Heaven is not beyond the sky,
Nor God remote.

But blest that hour when Love shall bring
To man and every living thing

One bond of peace.

When birds and beasts in man confide,

When wolf and lamb lie side by side,

And strife shall cease.

Then I may stand some coming day,

And watch the surf, the dashing spray,

And angry sea;

That day a faith my soul may fill,

And I may bid the waves be still

With God in me.



LOVE OWNS THEM ALL

The worm that creeps, the bird that flies,
The star that circuits through the skies,
Each mountain tall;
The modest flower that dots the green,
The tiny insect quite unseen;
Love owns them all.

The humblest form that I may meet,
That strays so helpless at my feet,
I cannot harm;
Why should I choose 'twixt great and small,
Since ceaseless Love enfolds them all
With sheltering arm.

Come Love and lay thy gentle hand
On this and every other land
Beneath the sun:
Teach us to help our brothers weak,
Teach us "Thy Way" to think and speak
And make us one.

Oh Love, subdue all greed and strife,
Blot out all hate from human life;

Keep us from sin :

Come quickly then with guileless art
And softly knocking at each heart

Just enter in.

Then insect, bird, and timid deer
At man's approach will know no fear
With Love's increase.

Then wolf and lion now so wild,
Will lie beside the sleeping child
And rest in peace.



OH, PANSY SWEET

Oh pansy sweet, with velvet cheek,
I would indeed that thou couldst speak,
And thus declare
The art that could those outlines trace,
And blend the colors of thy face
With matchless care.

Oh pansy sweet, as I bend near,
Just whisper how thou camest here;
I long to know.
And as I wait on bended knee,
I fain would ask again of thee
To whisper low.

From thee at last I turn my ear;
I cannot get the answer here
I wish to know;
So too, I close the outer eye
And seek some message from on high,
That soundeth low.

I should arise, if I would hear
The voice that greets the inner ear,
And so will wait.

I must ascend if I would see
The things of God that dwell in me
Both small and great:

So, when I catch in coming hours
The hum of bees, or scent of flowers,
I'll long to see
How spirit works with art divine,
How loves and cares for forms like thine,
Though small they be.

I need not urge my sight, to see
The looms of God that weave in me
His fabrics bright;
The clouds of sense are floating past,
And I shall see all things at last
With perfect sight.

THE WORLD WITHIN

Outside myself, naught can I know;
Without, there naught can be;
The streams that run, the flowers that grow,
Exist alone in me.

The glow of eve, the tints of morn,
The soaring bird so free,
The odors on the zephyr borne
I know are all in me.

I court the forest's sweet retreat,
Or wander by the sea
Whose tumbling billows reach my feet;
But these are all in me.

The timid bird, the gentle deer,
That at my footsteps flee,
In rapid flight reflect the fear
That lurks unknown in me.

The star that runs its rapid course,
The dew drop on the tree,
Traced to their deep, mysterious source,
Still have their home in me.

In my true self all things I know;
All things are mine to see;
The sky above, the seas below,
Must find themselves in me.

The earth and stars, the heavens wide
That stretch from pole to pole,
Float on the bosom of that tide
Which sweeps within my soul.

Thou art in Me, and I in Thee;
One undivided mind;
As Truth dissolves all mystery,
The All in All I find.

THE INNER DOOR

Why waitest thou with anxious mind
Some fairer world than this to find,
For rest and peace?

Why watch with long expectant eye
For some retreat beyond the sky
Where discords cease?

Search as thou wilt both far and near,
Thou'lt find no sweeter place than here;
No fairer spot.

Here where each heart its sorrow knows
Is where that heart must find repose;
With pain forgot.

With loving thoughts can'st thou resign
Thy heart's desires, and not repine;
Nor murmur make?

Can'st thou o'erlook the cruel stings,
With all the grief that malice brings,
For Love's own sake?

Then, clean of hand and pure of heart,
Thou'lt find thy Heaven just where thou art:

Good everywhere.

Seek not thy home on far-off shore;
Thou standest by an open door:

Love waits thee there.

Love lays her gentle hand on thee,
And guides thy steps till thou art free
From taint of sin.

So rest, dear heart—search thou no more;
Thy hand rests on this open door;
Love bids thee in.

The *Inner Door* through which thou'lt see
Life's endless path inviting thee
Into thine own.

And step by step Truth leads the way
Through crimson dawn and radiant day
To heights unknown.

THE MYSTIC CHAIN

The mystic links that join the years
In one unbroken chain,
Will guide our willing footsteps here,
And make our pathway plain.

To realms untold these links extend;
All time and space they span:
There is no place where they will end,
Nor place where they began.

This chain which spans that *dark abyss*,
Dread vision of the night,
Conjoins the heavenly world with this,
And guides our feet aright.

This bond of Life makes all things one;
Nor fragments can it know;
One substance forms the rain, the sun,
And all the flowers that grow.

My hand rests on this golden chain,
Which guides me all the way;
And leads through darkness, grief, and pain
Into a perfect day.

Life, Truth, and Love—the Three in One,
And each in all the three;
Their circle runs from Sun to Sun,
And joins all things in Me.



THE WAITING CROWN

There comes a time to each, Dear Heart,
When tired hands have done their part,
And we would rest.

Rest from the chase of phantoms fleeing;
Rest from the groping without seeing;
In endless quest.

Yet each shall lay his burden down;
His cross exchange for waiting crown;
Some hour unknown.

'Tis not by sense we thread our way;
Our tired feet would go astray,
If left alone.

So, as our mortal sight grows dim,
With stronger faith we lean on Him;
There's none beside.

Nor can we claim a single power;
But live by Him each passing hour;
In Him abide.

'Tis well to heed the lesson taught,
That Truth is all, and error naught;
 Whilst God is Life;
It helps the heavy-laden heart;
It rests the hands that do their part;
 Midst noise and strife.

I do not yearn through heights to soar;
But just to pass the inner door,
 To scenes of peace.
I need not roam through unknown space,
To find my home, and resting place,
 Where discords cease;

I fain would grow as some fair tree;
Unfolding Truth and Love in me;
 Forgetting sin.
It matters not, if here or there;
Since God and Heaven are everywhere;
 And yet within.

LOVE'S FLOWING STREAM

There is a stream which onward flows
From its pure and boundless source;
Its mystic fount no mortal knows,
Nor sees its endless course.

No drought can check this ceaseless tide,
Nor storms its surface mar;
So safely on, my bark will glide,
With Truth its Polar Star.

I need not strive to bend a sail;
My course lies clear and free:
This constant stream can never fail
To reach Life's peaceful sea.

I hear the ripple of the tide
Whose way I cannot see;
But on its breast I calmly ride,
For all is well with me.

Oh blessed faith, that bids me test
So unexplored a way;
As on Love's stream in peace I rest,
My bark drifts not astray.

NEAR THE GATE

With look upturned to Wisdom's gate,
In patience I would learn to wait,
 Fair visions to behold.
Beyond all things, this is my choice;
To stand and listen, that His voice
 Some wonder may unfold,

Near to the portal I would wait
From early hour till day grows late;
 Nor could I weary grow.
I fain would see some vision bright,
Eclipsing every human sight,
 Transcending all I know.

Yes, at the threshold I may stand,
Made pure of heart and clean of hand,
 In spirit loving, mild.
Then visions fair will I behold,
While Truth and Love Themselves unfold,
 As to a little child.

LOVE'S UNBROKEN DAY

Why view with faltering breath
That phantom born of fear?
For God is Life, and knows no death,
And Love provokes no tear.

Dread not that passing dream
That darkens o'er our way;
'Tis but a cloud that hides the beam
Of Love's unbroken day.

God's faithful hand sustains,
Though deep'ning shadows fall;
Nor tremor of our fear remains,
Since He destroys it all.

No loss shall we deplore
As error fades from view,
For Love will brighten more and more
Each joy we ever knew.

Truth ever has been here.

Did we discern the light,
The phantoms of our earth-born fear
Would vanish from our sight.

God's searchlight pierces through
The mist that clouds our eyes;
It shows unceasing life is true,
Whilst only error dies.



SYMBOLS

The fire blazing on the hearth,
The quiet, pattering rain,
The daisies peeping from the earth,
Join in the same refrain.

We hear the waves of ocean roar,
We view the worlds on high,
But scarcely dream they stand for more
Than things that meet the eye.

Surrounded thus on every hand
With secrets yet untold,
I catch the fragrance of some land
I do not yet behold.

How may I know those sounds divine
That call me every day;
How see those objects that are mine
Strewn all along my way?

With patience tread each rugged height,
Let Truth my leader be,
'Til I behold with perfect sight,
The perfect world in me.

HEAVEN IS HERE

Forever on Love's ceaseless tide,
With trusting heart I sail;
I cannot doubt my Heavenly Guide,
Nor fear His love will fail.

In peace I rest—for well I know
Love keeps me day by day:
'Tis love that makes the zephyrs blow,
To waft me on my way.

A lily floating on the tide,
A daisy midst the green;
Each has its story to confide,
Of wonders yet unseen.

Earth's forms and voices come and go,
With secrets to unfold:
Some message for the world to know;
Or tidings to be told.

And so, with sense illumed by Him,
Love's heavenly tints appear;
And though our sight be weak and dim,
We'll find that Heaven is here.

TRUTH'S RISING STAR

Love hath her blessings to bestow
Through nature and through art;
And streams of love unceasing flow
Into each waiting heart.

Truth's rising star, with kindling ray
Makes every good appear;
And voices that have died away,
Our quickened sense will hear.

Think not those images in mind,
That memory calls her own,
Are lifeless shadows, ill defined,
Whence all we loved hath flown;

Love's gentle hand will touch thine eye,
Dear heart—and thou shalt see
That visions of the days gone by
Cannot be dead to thee.

I would not rashly ask the power
Truth's wondrous works to see;
But trust—and wait the coming hour
That holds these gifts for me.

The trusting heart waits not in vain;
For Truth will show the way
How voices hushed, may speak again,
And bless each passing day.



REST WITHIN

From the outer to the inner turn;
This is the Spirit's call:
Thus Truth and Love thou shalt discern,
And know the "All in All."

From the seen to the unseen turn;
Thus thou thy heaven wilt reach,
And of the inward Spirit learn,
What it alone can teach.

Turn from this restless mortal sense;
It's images of sin—
And thou shalt find sweet recompense,
In the deep peace within.

Rest, weary one, from pain and fear;
Seek thou this safe retreat;
Thy Father—Mother God, is here,
And waits His child to greet.

Come to this haven—sweetest, best:

The precincts of the Soul
Alone afford eternal rest;
That rest which makes us whole.

Thus shall thy faith its strength renew;
Earth's colors brighter glow;
Whilst new-born tints will greet thy view
In all the flowers that grow.

Thy fellow-man will then disclose
Love's gifts that will surprise;
As day by day he nobler grows,
Since God has touched *thine* eyes.



EARTH'S HIEROGLYPHS

The breaking of the day,
The falling of the rain,
The flowers along the way
That fade and bloom again.

The circuit of a star,
The tossing of the sea,
The mountain peaks afar,
A dear one's love for me.

The robin's sweet refrain,
The evening tints of gold,
And death that sends such pain
Are secrets all untold.

Truth's realm we fain would know
Through types and symbols here,
Though they but faintly show
How heavenly things appear.

At last, on every side,
Earth's types will disappear;
For things of sense but hide
Celestial forms so near.

Thus Truth will yet explain
Each emblem that we see,
As worlds, and drops of rain,
Shall yield their mystery.



FAIR TINTED ROSE

Thou queen of flowers with damask leaf,
I seek thee with a strong belief,
That in thy heart fair tinted rose,
Thou hast some secret to disclose.
I deeply feel that there must be
Some wondrous art concealed in thee:
So as I closely scan thy face
And wonder how God's hand can trace
Those lovely tints that charm the eye,
And halt the steps that hasten by;
I wonder still how odors rare
Exhale upon the summer air;
And yet beneath it all, I know,
Thy fragrance sweet and modest glow
Are but the whispers in my ear,
Of things I have so longed to hear.
So, as I take my summer walk,
And tune my mind with nature's talk,
I'll come again, sweet rose, to thee,
To hear my *Father* speak to me.

THE CATSKILLS

Far from the discords of the town,
Amid these cliffs I sit me down
 Where tumults cease.
Encompassed thus, my thoughts arise
To heights beyond these peaks and skies
 Where dwelleth peace.

On wood and rock is many a name,
Inscribed to give the writer fame:
 A fame that dies.
These rocks will crumble and decay;
These mortal names will pass away
 From mortal eyes.

Write not thy name on crumbling stone,
But on that rock which stands alone
 Through storm and strife.
Truth's changeless rock: Then deeply trace
Thy name upon its lasting face;
 It stands for "Life."

LIFE'S ENDLESS TIDE

The never ending moan and cry,
Born on each breeze that passes by
 With chilling breath;
The crowning woe of all the years;
Unfathomed gulf of ceaseless tears;
 This dream of death.

Oh, troubled heart, couldst thou but see
Love's angels standing close by thee
 To light thy way;
That spectral dream would disappear,
And Truth would change thy night of fear
 To endless day.

Oh, winds of God, blow swiftly by
The mist that darkens earth and sky
 With this dread fear.
Roll back the clouds that bound our view,
Reveal that life, not death, is true;
 Dry every tear.

Untarnished Truth, whose perfect reign
Knows naught of death, and naught of pain,
Speed on thy day.

Come nearer, guardians of our night,
Thy torches flaming clear and bright,
To light our way.

Unending stream, thy circuit runs
Beyond the stars and far-off suns,
Yet ever clear.

No storms can lash thy placid waves,
No thought of death nor dread of graves
Can reach us here.

Thou flowing Life; thy current strong
Will safely bear our bark along
Thy waters wide.

We fear no rock, we dread no gale,
For God is with us as we sail
Out on the tide.

THE NEW BIRTH

Close gently now the opened door;
Tread lightly o'er the chamber floor
 To where the Infant lies.
Turn back the eiderdown and lace
That shade that pretty baby face;
 That hide those drowsy eyes.

Here lies our promise of a man,
Whose human life is but a span;
 At best a dreamy sleep.
Oh, darling babe!—To human heart
Can aught be dearer than thou art,
 Or other joy so deep?

Ah! mortal child—how sweet the bliss
That gathers round a scene like this;
 Then why that deep heart sigh?
Because—Conjoined with joy is fear;
Because—Each smile begets a tear;
 Each mortal hope may die.

I turn my weary, longing eyes
To where another Infant lies,
 Whose sweetness welcomes me.
In the deep cloister of my heart,
From noisy strife and sense apart,
 This new-born babe I see.

The Infant Christ, the Child Divine,
That nestles in this heart of mine
 And lisps a language new.
So day by day the child thoughts grow,
And day by day I better know
 These lisping words are true.



HOUSES NOT MADE WITH HANDS

Oh! Brother; soon thy wearied hand
Will need no more to toil;
To delve and dig—to plough the land,
And till the barren soil.

Nor temples build: for man will find
Each structure raised in stone,
Is but a symbol of that Mind
Which builds in Mind alone.

Man will not lift with fainting heart,
Those heavy blocks each one;
For God can build; whose matchless art
Excels what man has done.

With pride we claim, the hand of man
Hath built each towering wall;
But never see God's perfect plan
That stands behind it all.

As man works on, and labors still,
To do his humble part,
God will disclose His mystic skill,
Unknown to human art.

When we in wisdom shall have grown,
We then shall understand
That houses, not of wood nor stone,
God builds with His own hand.



TRANSITION

On drowsy wing we seem to soar
Amid the clouds that hide the shore,
Where prospects new will claim our sight,
And fill us with a strange delight.
How like a dream;—and some may say
'Tis all a dream, that fades away:
A dream perplexed—as in a maze;
With visions dim, seen through a haze;
And scenes that change from old to new;
Some much too dear, to bid adieu.
If dream it be, one faithful guide
Will walk unseen, close by our side.
Though dream it be, concealed, there lies
Some good withheld from mortal eyes.
Our wakened senses will expand
To catch the perfume of that land;
While warbling notes entrance the ear,
'Till heaven itself seems very near.
With thankful hearts we'll wake to find,
That not one good is left behind.
The dearest friends we ever knew,
Like gold refined, stand firm and true.

Love's sheltering arms are spread to save
The smallest gift she ever gave.
Transition? Yes: and must we say
'Tis but a dream that fades away?
I know 'tis Love's sweet cradle song
That soothes, and smoothes our way
along;
And Wisdom shows, though strangely true,
That God names nothing old or new.
So through the mist with vision dim,
Our faltering steps are led by Him;
And be our transit short or long,
Love ceases not her sweetest song.
So rest dear heart, fear not the way:
Thou'lt lose no good of yesterday:
The links that bind the new and old
Are for thy hand to take and hold.
So, be thy transit short or long,
Love ne'er forgets her own sweet song.

THE MISTS OF EARTH

Another step I take to-day,
Towards that distant height,
Which towers high mid vapors grey,
Though often lost to sight.

But, step by step, I slowly rise
Above all doubts and fears,
'Till purer visions greet my eyes,
And sweeter sounds, my ears.

The mists of earth obscure the sight
Of glories close at hand:
But as we rise, we catch the light
Which shines o'er sea and land.

OUR NEAREST FRIEND

We shall arise above each fear,
Each sorrow, pain, and falling tear:
God will direct our vision high
To view Love's rainbow in the sky.

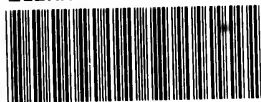
He will sustain the sinking heart,
And heal each wound with loving art:
We have no nearer friend than He;
So let us trust implicitly.

Why not accept this friend so near;
Whose every thought is help and cheer?
Just take His loving hand to-day,
And let Him guide you on the way.

'Tis hard our will to lay aside
And in His wisdom just confide;
But through that wisdom I now see,
Strength is in God, and not in me.

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